

Housing and Homelessness Action Plan Five-Year Strategy Update May 22, 2019

Strategy	Status	Update	Recommend	Responsible
Strategy 1.1 Advocate for the creation of a National Housing Strategy and advocate to provincial and federal levels of government to adequately fund new affordable housing development	Complete	Together the City of Hamilton, service providers and citizens advocated for a National Housing Strategy (NHS). Launched in 2017, the 10-year, \$55-billion NHS signaled a new role, new approach, and renewed commitment to housing for the federal government. It is a sweeping, complex and ambitious initiative that focuses on meeting key housing outcomes including building up to 125,000 new affordable housing units, cutting homelessness in half, and renovating and modernizing 300,000 homes. To date two new development projects and one significant social housing retrofit project have been awarded funding through the NHS Co-Investment Fund, and others are in the process of applying.	Complete - Remove	
Strategy 1.4 Explore the feasibility of inclusionary zoning (i.e. zoning that requires/mandates a certain component of larger developments to be affordable housing) and seek necessary provincial legislative changes that would facilitate the implementation of inclusionary zoning in Hamilton	Actioned	Council has supported inclusionary zoning in principle; however, the new provincial government is expected to take a different approach to inclusionary zoning. In the newly released Housing Supply Action Plan and proposed implementing legislation, inclusionary zoning will be focused in areas of high growth and near major transit areas.	Actioned and embedded	Province & City
Strategy 1.5 Explore the feasibility/further promote opportunities that exist in the Urban Hamilton Official Plan for density bonusing and use of Community Improvement Plans to offer other incentives for affordable housing	Actioned	Hamilton's Downtown Secondary Plan now permits the use of density bonusing through Sec. 37 of the <i>Planning Act</i> . The Downtown Secondary Plan specifically includes the following bonusing provisions: rental and affordable housing, community facilities, child care centres, cultural amenities and transit station improvements. Work is underway by the Planning Division on guidelines to implement density bonusing.	Embedded	City
Strategy 1.7 Inventory and map affordable housing development opportunities including: underutilized commercial space that can be converted to residential, vacant residential space in buildings, vacant government land that is viable for affordable housing	Actioned	The Real Estate Division reviewed and consulted with Councillors on hundreds of parcels of surplus City-owned land. Of these, the Affordable Housing Site Selection Subcommittee approved 20 suitable for affordable housing development or available for market sale, with proceeds from such sales directed into a dedicated reserve fund to be used for future development of affordable housing. Four sites have been allocated by Council to CityHousing Hamilton for new development. The Real Estate and Housing Services Divisions are working on plans for a number of sites. Mapping and keeping a record of opportunities for affordable housing development is on the workplan of the Investment in Affordable Housing Team.	Actioned & embedded	City
Strategy 1.8 Advocate for changes to the City's and senior governments' surplus land policy to make surplus land available for affordable housing development at discounted or no cost	Actioned	As noted above, the City has dedicated 20 City-owned sites for affordable housing, either as land for new affordable housing development or to be sold with the proceeds used to fund new development on another site. The previous provincial government initiated the Affordable Housing Lands Program, but it has not been continued by the current government. As part of the National Housing Strategy, the Federal Lands Initiative will transfer surplus lands and buildings to eligible participants at discounted to no cost.	Actioned - IAH Team is monitoring	City, Affordable Housing Developers & Community

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Strategy 1.10 Provide learning opportunities to community leaders, decision makers and the general public around good urban planning principles in order to support their role as facilitators of affordable housing development	Actioned	The Planning Division provides public urban planning learning opportunities. Events such as National Housing Day and the 2019 Housing Summit provide additional learning opportunities to diverse stakeholders.	Actioned & embedded	City & Community
Strategy 1.12 Explore the feasibility of establishing a Housing Trust Fund to help finance affordable housing development.	Complete	The Hamilton Community Land Trust has been established and has completed one unit in partnership with Habitat for Humanity Hamilton.	Complete - Remove	Hamilton Community Land Trust
Strategy 2.1(a) Encourage mixed housing and mixed income development in all urban neighbourhoods by: Increasing opportunities for rental, social and affordable housing in areas that currently offer limited opportunities Strategy 2.1(b) Encourage mixed housing and mixed income development in all urban neighbourhoods by ensuring all social housing communities have a market housing component Strategy 2.1 (c) Encourage mixed housing and mixed income development in all urban neighbourhoods by exploring opportunities for social housing communities to redevelop to include a mix of new housing options	Actioned	An investment of \$63 million has been approved for the first large-scale revitalization of CityHousing Hamilton's (CHH's) portfolio. One of the goals of the revitalization of CHH's portfolio is to create communities with a broader mix of tenants. Revitalization projects include 500 MacNab, Jamesville, and Roxborough, and there are a number of new build projects planned as mixed communities. The new Downtown, Commercial Mixed Use, and Transit Oriented Zoning provides opportunities for mixed housing types and densities. The work on the new residential zoning is underway and will also promote mixed housing.	Actioned & embedded	City & Development community
Strategy 2.2 Develop a policy and strategy to ensure the low and moderate income households in neighbourhoods experiencing economic growth and transformation are not displaced or negatively impacted by gentrification	Actioned	The Downtown Secondary Plan requires the replacement of any demolished rental units on site and a transition plan to assist tenants until they can be rehoused in the replaced units or other suitable location at similar rents. The Housing Services Division has created the Tenant Defense Fund Pilot Program to help groups of tenants facing above guideline increases for which their landlords have applied to the Landlord and Tenant Board (LTB), hire professionals to represent them at the LTB, and by providing other types of assistance. Condominium conversion and demolition control policies are in place to restrict the conversion of rental units into condominiums when rental markets are tight. These policies are being reviewed.	Actioned & embedded	City, Community & senior levels of government
Strategy 2.3 Increase homeownership opportunities for renters- including social housing tenants (e.g. down payment assistance programs, rent-to-own initiatives, and education on purchase process, etc.)	Actioned	The City of Hamilton administers the Down Payment Assistance Program which is funded by a revolving loan fund initially created with Federal-Provincial funds.	Embedded	City & senior levels of government
Strategy 2.4 Expand portable and in-situ rent subsidy programs (i.e. rent supplements and/or housing allowances that go with the tenant and are not tied to a particular unit)	Actioned	Since 2016, the City has invested \$1.1 M annually to support low income tenants through portable housing allowances. The Provincial and Federal Governments have both committed to providing portable housing benefits.	Embedded	City & senior levels of government

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Strategy 2.5 Investigate the feasibility of developing an emergency housing subsidy to help tenants and homeowners bridge temporary financial crisis situations	Actioned	The City has continued to provide the Housing Stability Benefit (HSB) to homeless individuals and families including providing a last month rent deposit directly to the landlord, paying rental arrears, and paying utility arrears. The HSB can be accessed by Ontario Works recipients or those with low income. The Housing Help Centre no longer offers the Rent Bank or the Housing Emergency Loan Program. HSB is a benefit provided by the City of Hamilton by Ontario Works Case Managers or through the Housing Help Centre. The recently expanded City Emergency Repair Program helps low income homeowners with emergency home repairs.	Actioned & embedded	City & Province
Strategy 2.8 Explore options that ensure social housing applicants and tenants have as much choice as possible (e.g. increase in the number of times they can refuse an offer to be housed; choice based letting)	Complete	The City's Offer and Refusals Policy was revised in 2016 following community consultation. It outlines criteria for refusals and the maximum number of refusals. The Housing Services Division provided training on the Offers and Refusals Policy in 2016 and 2017. At this time, the City of Hamilton is not implementing a choice-based system due to concerns over the impact such a system would have on vulnerable households.	Complete - Remove	City
Strategy 2.9 Advocate for changes to income policies including: increased social assistance rates (shelter components), Living Wage policy, Guaranteed Annual Income is allocated based on tax information, ODSP benefits delivery	Actioned	The City does not directly influence policies regarding social assistance rates. The City participated in the 2017 Provincial Basic Income Pilot which was cancelled in 2018 by the subsequent government.	Embedded	Community, City & Province
Strategy 3.1 Expand housing with support options including mobile, in-situ and transitional housing options	Actioned	The Residential Care Facilities system is undergoing a comprehensive review with the goal of improving services. CityHousing Hamilton has submitted a proposal to the LHIN for more transitional housing units. In 2015, the City also funded a Rapid Rehousing Program for Women that adheres to the Housing First philosophy. The City has provided financial support for case management services at a number of transitional housing and supportive housing programs including: YWCA Hamilton (65 units), Wesley Youth Homes (8 units), and Indwell Strathearne Suites (39 units). A Housing First for Youth demonstration project called "Endaayaang" is currently underway. Additional Provincial investment through the Home for Good Program allocated an additional \$2 M for housing with supports in Hamilton.	Embedded	City, community, Province
Strategy 3.7 Encourage the development and implementation of enhanced eviction prevention policies in the social housing system	Actioned	City of Hamilton developed new guidelines and a toolkit for financial eviction prevention practices for social housing providers. Starting in 2015 and continuing, numerous educational workshops have been conducted on these guidelines and the Toolkit. The Toolkit continues to be shared and relevant.	Embedded	City

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Strategy 3.8 Ensure high quality, trauma-informed services and supports for individuals and families in homelessness and/or insecure housing situations	Actioned	Housing Services Division Clinical Social Workers (CSWs) work with men and women who are homeless and/or at risk of homelessness. Research shows an established link between trauma and addiction; that victims of trauma often attempt to control emotional pain, feelings of being hyper alert, and social withdrawal through the use of drugs, alcohol and/or self-harm, which frequently leads to housing instability. CSWs provide brief intervention and ongoing counselling. The Housing Services Division and partners such as the health care sector and community agencies, will continue to seek opportunities to partner to provide trauma-informed services and supports (i.e. Vanier Towers).	Embedded	City, Community, LHIN
Strategy 3.9 Advocate for an increase to the Ontario Works and Ontario Disability Support Program personal needs allowance	Unknown	These are community led initiatives and actions.	Embedded	Community, City & Province
Strategy 3.10 Support the implementation of current and emergent local housing and homelessness systems plans that address housing with supports	Actioned	Creation of the community-wide By Name Priority List (BNPL) informs a coordinated access system that streamlines the process by which people experiencing homelessness access housing and supports. The BNPL will help 'triage' homeless individuals with respect to their needs and experiences with homelessness. The Housing Services Division and City-funded homeless-serving agencies have worked together to transform the first-come, first-serve approach to a rights-based system that prioritizes resources based on client needs.	Embedded	City & Community
Strategy 4.2 Review the impacts of continued proactive enforcement of property standards on the supply of affordable rental properties	Actioned	The City of Hamilton bylaw enforcement team continues to review the impact of continued proactive enforcement of property standards. City Council has directed bylaw to continue this process. IAH Team is reviewing the impacts to inform the rental licensing pilot program included in the report back to Council. On the Investment in Affordable Housing Team Work plan and Outstanding Business List.	Embedded	City
Strategy 4.3 Continue proactive enforcement of property standards of affordable rental housing.	Actioned	City bylaw enforcement team continues to practice proactive enforcement of property standards. This continues to be the City's approach since Council passed a motion on September 25, 2013 approving a program focused on the permanent proactive enforcement program of rental housing conditions.	Embedded	City
Strategy 4.4 Develop a communication strategy to landlords about maintenance responsibilities and available programs to rehabilitate the housing stock	Actioned	The Housing Help Centre through their landlord liaison officers continue to proactively engage landlords about maintenance and other responsibilities. The Housing Services Division promotes available maintenance programs through stakeholder groups. The IAH Team regularly communicates with landlord groups to provide program information on renovation programs and other matters. Ongoing work with landlords will have a broader focus.	Embedded	City
Strategy 4.5 Develop and implement a proactive and coordinated strategy to address bed bugs	Actioned	The first Bed Bug Strategy has been completed and is being implemented in partnership with the Housing Help Centre and other stakeholders.	Embedded	City

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Strategy 4.7 Support and monitor housing providers in the implementation of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) on the Built Environment	Complete	The Housing Services Division provides written notification and training opportunities to social housing providers on their responsibilities with regard to human rights, including the duty to accommodate persons with disabilities and the AODA. In Nov. 2016, the Housing Services Division provided an AODA information session to 30 social housing providers which resulted in renovation projects that impacted approximately 500 units.	Embedded	City
Strategy 4.8 Expand assistance programs to facilitate modifications for persons with disabilities in private market housing (e.g. Ontario Renovates).	Complete	The Ontario Renovates Program supports accessibility modifications to affordable rental and owned housing with up to \$5,000 per unit. The Emergency Repair Program was expanded to include all low income homeowners and accessibility modifications.	Embedded	City
Strategy 4.9 Inventory, rate and increase the number of social housing units that meet the needs of persons with disabilities through existing and new housing opportunities.	Complete	2017 Social Housing Accessible Unit Program - \$500,000 block funding was invested to increase the number of accessible units in the social housing portfolio. 14 social housing providers received funding to make non-accessible units more accessible, improve or update accessible units, and add accessibility features to common areas. An inventory of all accessible and modified social housing units is underway to assess the accessibility of the social housing stock, facilitate better matching of applicants with accessible units and help applicants make informed choices about the size, type and location of units.	Embedded	City
Strategy 4.12 Plan and implement community building efforts that will develop a "sense of community" in all social housing (e.g. activities that will positively enhance neighbour relations)	Actioned	The Housing Services Division is coordinating a community building effort at Vanier Towers in partnership with CityHousing Hamilton. Broader community work led by the Social Planning and Research Council of Hamilton (SPRC) in partnership with Hamilton East Kiwanis Non-Profit Homes Inc., Victoria Park Community Homes Inc. and McGivney Community Homes Inc. has created a resident engagement initiative in the South Mountain. Supported by a two-year grant from the Ontario Trillium Foundation, the primary purpose of the small grants program is to encourage and facilitate resident engagement in neighbourhoods.	Embedded	City & community
Strategy 4.14 Develop and implement person-centred made-in-Hamilton occupancy standards for social housing.	Complete	Occupancy standards determine the size and type of unit a household is eligible to receive rent-geared-to-income assistance. Social housing providers follow the Occupancy Standards policy which was developed after 18-months of consultation with housing providers, advocates and community agencies. The Occupancy Standard policy was revised in 2017 to specify criteria and to remove previous unit size restrictions based on the age and sex of dependents	Embedded	City

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Strategy 5.1 Develop a system navigator role focused on supporting people in directly accessing appropriate housing supports	Complete	The enhancements to Access to Housing guides applicants through the social housing application process, provides information about other suitable housing options, and connects applicants to the available City and community resources and supports that can help people obtain and maintain market housing. The Housing Services Division has added additional resources to triage housing needs and support households on the Access to Housing Waitlist. Housing with supports review and social services integration work will help inform a navigation role going forward.	Embedded	City & community
Strategy 5.2 Develop a practice of cross-sectored case conferencing to ensure optimal services for people	Actioned	The Housing Services Division has implemented a System Housing Triage for the purpose of accelerating housing solutions, involving representatives from the men's and women's emergency shelter system, the youth serving sector, and our Indigenous partners, including Housing First programs for all four sectors. This Triage table also includes the Social Navigator Program, Mental Health Street Outreach, and housing providers. This is part of a Plan, Do, Study, Act (PDSA) cycle which allows us to take lessons learned from the Triage and incorporate them into a sustained, ongoing housing solutions table.	Embedded	City & community
Strategy 5.3 Develop web and print based resources that comprehensively outline all housing options in Hamilton and relevant contact information in a variety of languages and forms	Complete	City housing web content was updated in 2015 and includes the Eviction Prevention Toolkit, translation sheets and the Hamilton Immigration Partnership Council Guide. Access to housing web content was updated in 2018 to reflect changes. The Housing Guide for Persons With Disabilities was completed in 2018	Embedded	City & community
Strategy 5.4 Develop information and data sharing protocols across relevant housing, income and other support systems	Actioned	In 2019, the City of Hamilton was required to implement a Homeless Management Information System called HIFIS (Homeless Individuals and Families Information System) in accordance with Federal homelessness policy. By the end of implementation (March 2021), the HIFIS system will be implemented across all services for people experiencing homelessness and enable service providers to share information to improve people's access to housing and support services. The Housing Services Division has increased the number of agencies utilizing the program and established information sharing protocols which will allow HIFIS to be used across sectors as part of the Coordinated Access System. This work is ongoing as part of the social services integration work.	Embedded	City, senior level of government & community
Strategy 5.5 Through training and cross-sectored collaboration, provide comprehensive and certification-based training on a number of service-improvement areas, such as understanding the housing system and anti-oppressive and anti-racist service provision	Actioned	Core Collaborative Learning offers a wide range of training modules on housing and homelessness through a lens of anti-oppression and anti-racist service provision. Since 2015, the City has provided 16 training sessions on best practices such as shelter diversion, motivational interviewing, the Service Prioritization Decision Assistance Tool (SPDAT), progressive engagement, and housing focussed sheltering. Over 400 service provider staff have attended these trainings. Other events to build cross sectoral collaboration include system planning, leadership academy, and coordinated access learning sessions.	Embedded	City, senior level of government & community

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Strategy 5.6 Encourage organizations to engage in service and system planning	Actioned	Through the Housing and Homelessness Action Plan Planning Group all sectors focused primarily on housing and homelessness work together on system-wide planning with the Housing and Homelessness Action Plan as the road map. Additional expert system planning tables have been created to discuss coordinated access in the homelessness serving system to ensure comprehensive system designs and transformation.	Embedded	City, senior level of government & community
Strategy 5.7 Engage tenants and landlords regarding rights and responsibilities through: Outreach, Mediation and Public Awareness	Actioned	The Housing Help Centre and Hamilton's four Housing First programs have taken proactive steps to achieve the goals of this strategy. As of June 2018, Hamilton's Housing First Landlord Liaisons and Intensive Case Management teams have successfully connected 683 individuals and households to appropriate housing, providing ongoing advocacy and mediation to both tenants and landlords, bridging the relationship to foster increasing housing stability with Hamilton's most vulnerable homeless individuals and families.	Embedded	City & community
Strategy 5.9 Ensure that clients/participants/tenants are meaningfully engaged in planning and decision making in the areas that impact their lives. This includes: a model for citizen engagement which will be applied to the Action Plan implementation phase and the Housing Services Division; citizen engagement as part of housing and homelessness service funding relationships with community based agencies.	Actioned	The Housing Services Division practices meaningful engagement through active consultation with the following groups: the Housing and Homelessness Advisory Committee, Homelessness Funding Implementation Group, Housing and Homelessness Action Plan Planning Group, Aboriginal Community Advisory Committee, and Coalition of Hamilton Indigenous Leadership. A formalized engagement approach will be approved through the Housing and Homelessness Action Plan Planning Group.	Embedded	City